

Rep. Wendy Warburton, Havre

HD 34, Northern Hill & Blaine Counties

Testimony in Support of SB 222, "Revise 4-Lane Construction on Highway 2"

You will hear great testimony today on the economic importance of expanding Highway 2 to four lanes. The bill explicitly mentions tourism and economic development. I agree that expanding Highway 2 to four lanes would be of great economic benefit to the Hi-Line.

However, I would like to draw your attention to a couple of additional important reasons to support this bill.

1) The People Want This.

In my part of the state, expanding Highway 2 is NOT a partisan issue. You can't travel many miles down Highway 2 without seeing a sign that says "Support 4-for-2! Contact Your Congressman." You see "Support 4-for-2" bumper stickers on the vehicles of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.

2) SAFETY.

Growing up on the Hi-Line I have traveled Highway 2 literally thousands of times. The road is busy, and it is narrow. It's getting busier. There are multitudes of deer along the road at night, and on a road this narrow, they are difficult to avoid.

During the Transmittal break last weekend, I traveled home to the Hi-Line and even drove Highway 2 all the way to North Dakota to visit friends. Maybe it was an odd weekend, but I noticed both on the way home and on the way back that I seemed to encounter more traffic on parts of Highway 2 than I observed on the interstate between Helena and Great Falls.

Driving along Highway 2, you see many white crosses where accidents have taken place over the years. Many families have lost loved ones in collisions along this road. I can't tell you how many close calls I have had when people trying to pass slower moving vehicles along this increasingly busy highway have nearly resulted in serious accidents.

You may not travel it often, but a lot of people do. Highway 2 is an important corridor that merits improvement.

For the safety of my family, friends, and neighbors -- as well as for the economic benefits -- I urge you to support SB 222.

Thank you!